Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:
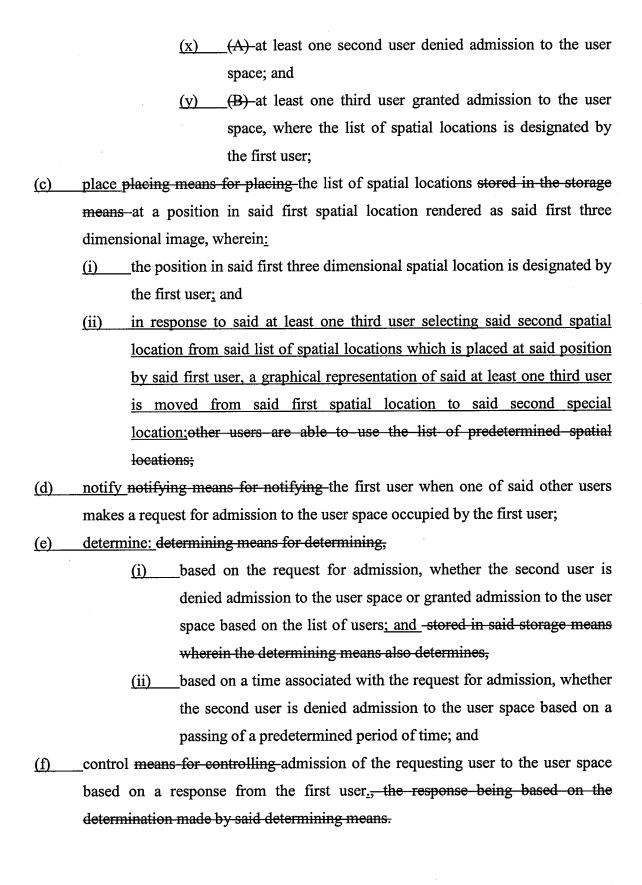
Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An information processing apparatus for managing a virtual space, the information apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a memory device storing instructions, which when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:

(a)   maintain ~~processing means for maintaining~~ a user space within the virtual space, wherein:

    (i)   the user space comprises spatial locations that virtually represent areas owned and occupied by a first user; ~~wherein~~

    (ii)   said spatial locations are rendered as three dimensional images; ~~wherein~~

    (iii)   said spatial locations including: ~~includes~~

        (A)   a first spatial location rendered as a first three dimensional image; and

        (B)   a second spatial location rendered as a second three dimensional image; and ~~wherein~~

    (iv)   the first user controls admission of other users within the user space for chat sessions with the first user;

(b)   store: ~~storage means for storing:~~

    (i)   ~~(a)~~ the user space;

    (ii)   ~~(b)~~ a list of spatial locations; and

    (iii)   ~~(c)~~ at least one list of other users associated with a chat session within the user space, wherein said list of other users:

        (A)   ~~(i)~~ is generated by the first user; and

        (B)   ~~(ii)~~ includes:

(x)   ~~(A)~~ at least one second user denied admission to the user space; and

(y)   ~~(B)~~ at least one third user granted admission to the user space, where the list of spatial locations is designated by the first user;

(c)   place ~~placing means for placing~~ the list of spatial locations ~~stored in the storage means~~ at a position in said first spatial location rendered as said first three dimensional image, wherein:

(i)   the position in said first three dimensional spatial location is designated by the first user; and

(ii)   in response to said at least one third user selecting said second spatial location from said list of spatial locations which is placed at said position by said first user, a graphical representation of said at least one third user is moved from said first spatial location to said second special location; ~~other users are able to use the list of predetermined spatial locations;~~

(d)   notify ~~notifying means for notifying~~ the first user when one of said other users makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user;

(e)   determine: ~~determining means for determining,~~

(i)   based on the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users; and ~~stored in said storage means wherein the determining means also determines,~~

(ii)   based on a time associated with the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space based on a passing of a predetermined period of time; and

(f)   control ~~means for controlling~~ admission of the requesting user to the user space based on a response from the first user., ~~the response being based on the determination made by said determining means.~~

Claim 2 (currently amended): The information processing apparatus of Claim 1, wherein <u>when executed by the processor, the plurality of instructions cause the processor to</u> ~~the notifying means is configured to~~ provide at least one of a visual and audible notification to the first user.

Claims 3-4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (currently amended): The information processing apparatus of Claim 1, <u>wherein when executed by the processor, the plurality of instructions cause the processor to:</u> ~~further comprising:~~

(a) <u>store</u> ~~storage means for storing~~ first entry information generated by the first user to allow other users to enter the user space;

(b) <u>distribute</u> ~~distributing means for distributing~~ the first entry information ~~stored in the storage means~~ to the second user in response to an instruction from the first user; and

(c) <u>determine</u> ~~determining means for determining~~ whether entry information used by the second user to gain access to the user space matches the first entry information ~~stored in the storage means~~ when the second user uses the <u>distributed</u> first entry information ~~distributed by the distributing means~~ to make a request for admission to the user space; <u>and</u>

(d) ~~wherein,~~ when the determining means determines that the entry information used by the second user matches the first entry information<u>:</u> ~~stored in the storage means,~~

(i) <u>terminate</u> the notification<u>; and</u> ~~by the notifying means is terminated, and~~

(ii) <u>permit</u> ~~the control means permits~~ the second user admission to the user space.

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (currently amended): An information processing method for managing a virtual space, the information processing method comprising:

maintaining a user space within the virtual space, wherein:

(a)   the user space comprises spatial locations that virtually represent areas owned and occupied by a first user;, wherein

(b)   said spatial locations are rendered as three dimensional images;, wherein

(c)   said spatial locations includes a first spatial location rendered as a first three dimensional image;, and wherein

(d)   the first user controls admission of other users within the user space for chat sessions with the first user;

storing:

(a)   the user space;

(b)   a list of spatial locations; and

(c)   at least one list of users associated with a chat session within the user space, wherein said list of users:

(i)   is generated by the first user; and

(ii)   includes:

(A)   at least one other user denied admission to the user space; and

(B)   at least one other user granted admission to the user space wherein the list of spatial locations is designated by the first user;

placing the list of spatial locations at a position in said first spatial location rendered as said first three dimensional image, wherein:

(a)   the position in said first three dimensional spatial location is designated by the first user; and

(b)   in response to said at least one third user selecting said second spatial location from said list of spatial locations which is placed at said position by said first user, a graphical representation of said at least one third user is moved from said first spatial location to said second special

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location;~~other users are able to use the list of predetermined spatial~~ ~~locations;~~

notifying the first user when a second user makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user;

determining, based on the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users; ~~stored in said storage means;~~

determining, based on a time associated with the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space based on a passing of a predetermined period of time; and

controlling admission of the second user to the user space based on a response from the first user, the response being based on the determination made by said determining steps.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A storage medium having stored therein a computer-readable program for causing a computer system to perform processing which enables a plurality of users to communicate with one another in a shared virtual space formed and provided on a computer network, the program comprising the steps of:

maintaining a user space within the virtual space, wherein:

(a)   the user space comprises spatial locations that virtually represent areas owned and occupied by a first user;, ~~wherein~~

(b)   said spatial locations are rendered as three dimensional images;, ~~wherein~~

(c)   said spatial locations including: ~~includes~~

(i)   a first spatial location rendered as a first three dimensional image;, and ~~wherein~~

(ii)   a second spatial location rendered as a second three dimensional image; and

(d)   the first user controls admission of other users within the user space for chat sessions with the first user;

storing:

(a)   the user space;

(b) ___a list of spatial locations; and

(c) ___at least one list of users associated with a chat session within the user space, wherein said list of users:

    (i) ___is generated by the first user; and

    (ii) ___includes:

        (A) ___at least one other user denied admission to the user space; and

        (B) ___at least one other user granted admission to the user space wherein the list of spatial locations is designated by the first user;

placing the list of spatial locations at a position in said first spatial location rendered as said first three dimensional image, wherein:

    (a)   the position in said first three dimensional spatial location is designated by the first user; and

    (b)   in response to said at least one third user selecting said second spatial location from said list of spatial locations which is placed at said position by said first user, a graphical representation of said at least one third user is moved from said first spatial location to said second special location; ~~other users are able to use the list of predetermined spatial locations;~~

notifying the first user when a second user makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user;

determining, based on the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users; ~~stored in said storage means;~~

determining, based on a time associated with the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space based on a passing of a predetermined period of time; and

controlling admission of the second user to the user space based on the determination made in the determining steps.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A program for causing a computer to perform the steps of: maintaining a user space within the virtual space, wherein:

(a)   the user space comprises spatial locations that virtually represent areas owned and occupied by a first user;~wherein~

(b)   said spatial locations are rendered as three dimensional images;~wherein~

(c)   said spatial locations including: ~includes~

(i)   a first spatial location rendered as a first three dimensional image;~ and ~wherein~

(ii)   a second spatial location rendered as a second three dimensional image; and

(d)   the first user controls admission of other users within the user space for chat sessions with the first user;

storing:

(a)   the user space;

(b)   a list of spatial locations; and

(c)   at least one list of users associated with a chat session within the user space, wherein said list of users:

(i)   is generated by the first user; and

(ii)   includes:

(A)   at least one other user denied admission to the user space; and

(B)   at least one other user granted admission to the user space wherein the list of spatial locations is designated by the first user;

placing the list of spatial locations at a position in said first spatial location rendered as said first three dimensional image, wherein:

(a)   the position in said first three dimensional spatial location is designated by the first user; and

(b)   in response to said at least one third user selecting said second spatial location from said list of spatial locations which is placed at said position

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by said first user, a graphical representation of said at least one third user is moved from said first spatial location to said second special location;~~other users are able to use the list of predetermined spatial locations;~~

notifying a first user when a second user makes a request for admission to a virtual space occupied by the first user;

determining, based on the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in said storage means;

determining, based on a time associated with the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space based on a passing of a predetermined period of time; and

controlling admission of the second user to the virtual space based on the determination made in the determining steps.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The program of Claim 9, the program causing the computer to perform the further steps of:

storing a list of users designated by the first user as those denied admission to the virtual space;

determining whether the second user is on the list when the second user makes the request for admission to the virtual space; and

terminating the notification and denying the second user admission to the virtual space when it is determined that the second user is on the list.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The program of Claim 9, the program causing the computer to perform the further steps of:

storing a list of users designated by the first user as those permitted admission to the virtual space;

determining whether the second user is on the list when the second user makes the request for admission to the virtual space; and

terminating the notification and permitting the second user admission to the virtual space when it is determined that the second user is on the list.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The program of Claim 9, the program causing the computer to perform the further steps of:

storing first entry information generated by the first user to allow other users to enter the virtual space;

distributing the stored first entry information to the second user in response to an instruction from the first user;

determining whether entry information used by the second user to gain access to the virtual space matches the stored first entry information when the second user uses the distributed first entry information to make a request for admission to the virtual space; and

terminating the notification and permitting the second user admission to the virtual space when it is determined in the determining step that the entry information used by the second user matches the stored first entry information.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The program of Claim 9, the program causing the computer to perform the further steps of:

storing a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual space, the spatial locations. being designated by the first user; and

placing the stored list in predetermined space in the virtual space in response to an instruction from the first user.

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Claim 14 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the list of spatial locations includes at least one spatial location that virtually represents an area owned by a user other than the first user.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The information processing method of Claim 7, wherein the list of spatial locations includes at least one spatial location that virtually represents an area owned by a user other than the first user.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The storage medium of Claim 8, wherein the list of spatial locations includes at least one spatial location that virtually represents an area owned by a user other than the first user.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The program of Claim 9, wherein the list of spatial locations includes at least one spatial location that virtually represents an area owned by a user other than the first user.